



Lesson 6—Our Creator *Gives Us Rules to Live By*

Exodus 19:1–24:18

Memory Verse

“He who keeps the commandment keeps his soul, But he who is careless of his ways will die”
(Proverbs 19:16)

Memorize

The Ten Commandments
(Exodus 20)

Teacher’s Objective

At the end of the session, the students should be able to:

Define the meaning of each of the Ten Commandments

Locate on a map Mount Sinai

Describe how God gave the Ten Commandments to His people

Express in their own words how keeping the Ten Commandments today will make them happy

Materials Needed

See “Teaching Activities” for specific activities

Teacher’s Bible Study

When God initially spoke to the Israelites from Sinai, He gave them the Ten Commandments (Exodus 20:1-17). It is true that the full covenant made with Israel at Sinai also contained other rules, regulations, and commands (Exodus 20-24). Yet the only code spoken directly to the people, rather than through Moses, and written on the tables of stone placed in the Ark of the Covenant, was the code of the Ten Commandments. The vital importance of these ten major precepts to our culture has been recognized even by historians who see no uniqueness in the Old Testament as a religious document.

Jesus Christ specifically listed five of the Ten Commandments (the Fifth, Sixth, Seventh, Eighth and Ninth commandments) when he told the young rich man, “If thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments” (Matthew 19:17). He also pointed out that the Ten Commandments have two basic objectives (Matthew 19:16–22; Mark 10:17-22; Luke 18:18–23): (1) the first four show how one is to love, worship, and honor God, and (2) the final six give the basis for how to love other human beings. Indeed, Jesus summarized the two basic objectives of the Ten Commandments when He answered the Pharisee’s question (read Matthew 22:36–40).

James wrote that “whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it” (James 2:10). What “law” was James so strongly upholding in this context? He makes this plain in the next verse by discussing two of the Ten Commandments (the Sixth and Seventh Commandments).

John wrote profoundly about God’s commandments in his first epistle: “And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments. He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him (I John 3:4). Moreover, “whatever we ask, we receive of him, because we keep his commandments” (I John 3:22).

Ultimately, the whole object is the love of God, which is the essence of God’s being: “For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome” (I John 5:3). The entirety of the law—in both its major and minor points—has the object of teaching us what godly love is. Unique stress has always been placed on the specific ten points first given at Mount Sinai. One can see an obvious reason for this.

The problems of our modern legal system are well known. Some laws are so badly worded that the individual citizen is hard put to know exactly what the legislators had in mind in framing them and how he is to adhere to those laws. On the other hand, each individual is continually beset on all sides by a welter of picayune relations which seem to irritate more than help. How is one to come to grips with the situation without having to become a professional lawyer, as it were? The Ten Commandments, should be a model for the modern legislator. The Ten Commandments provide a few convenient categories by which all laws can be summarized and organized.

Presenting the Bible Story

The Israelites have left Egypt and have been traveling for three months. God displayed His great power by bringing His people out of slavery. He parted the Red Sea and protected them from the Egyptians. He provided manna and water in the desert. Now God has brought His people to Sinai to give them the Ten Commandments. In addition to these commandments He also gave other rules, regulations, and commands (Exodus 21-24).

Exodus 19:1-2

The word *desert* does not necessarily mean a dry, desolate place. It could mean that it was uninhabited grazing land. It is not known today exactly where Mount Sinai is. This mount is significant, though, because it is also where God appeared to Moses in a burning bush.

Exodus 19:3-4

When young eagles are learning to fly, their mother will fly under them to catch them. What a beautiful analogy of God's continued love for His people. God was there to protect His people as they left slavery and fled from the Egyptians.

Exodus 19:5-6

All the people need do is obey God and keep His covenant. If they do this, they will be His special people.

Exodus 19:7-17

When Moses presented to the elders of the people God's plan, they said, "All that the Lord has spoken we will do." They had three days to purify themselves, which meant they were to wash their bodies and clothing and abstain from sexual intercourse. During the three-day period, neither they nor animals were to come in contact with the mountain. If they did, they would be put to death. It was with the sound of a trumpet that the people came forward and stood at the foot of the mountain.

Exodus 19:18-25

The people stood trembling in fear. Imagine what it must have been like when they heard the blast of the trumpet. There was smoke, fire, thunder, and the whole mountain quaked. Only Moses and Aaron were allowed on the mountain. The priests and all the people were to stand at the base of the mountain. Moses made three trips to the mountaintop and back (Exodus 19:3,7-9, 20, 25).

Teacher's Note:

What follows is a brief explanation of each of the commandments. Have your students memorize the Ten Commandments. This is a project that may take the rest of the quarter to complete. Besides just memorizing them, be sure they understand and are able to explain each commandment.

First Commandment:

Worshiping no gods but the true God—If we were all able to do this first commandment perfectly, the next nine would be easy. We are supposed to put God above all else—above TV, sports, movie stars, friends, money, school etc. We are to love, honor, and worship the one true God who is the Creator of heaven and earth.

Second Commandment:

No manufactured images of God—People naturally like to deal with physical objects. Worshiping an invisible God and recognizing that He is more real than even the physical world does not come easily. Man seeks physical "aids" in worshiping God rather than coming to grips with the true reality of the transcendent, invisible God inaccessible to the five senses. An idol may be made of stone, metal, or wood. It can be large or small. It may even look like something God created, birds, fish, or people.. Since the use of an image clouds worshiping the true God, it was and is forbidden.

Third Commandment:

Not taking God's name in vain—Respect to authority is slowly being diminished from today's society. If you were to meet the President of the United States, you would not address him frivolously. You would show respect by referring to his office. To make use of God's name lightly in day-to-day conversation, or in a context which does not show respect or honor shows an unacceptable attitude toward God Himself. How one uses a name is an outward indicator of how one really feels toward the person. We are not to do anything that could hold God's name up to scorn. As Christians, what we do, what we teach, and how we teach it directly reflects upon God. We should take this responsibility *seriously*.

Fourth Commandment:

Sabbath for rest and worship—The Sabbath command is a pivotal one, serving both as a means of honoring and worshiping God and of aiding and restoring man. First, the Sabbath is a memorial of Creation—pointing to God as the Creator. Second, the human body requires rest for efficient bodily function and a proper mental outlook. Third, the Sabbath serves a spiritual function as well: It provides the opportunity for study and for meeting to receive instruction in the ways of God. Yes, any day of the week would provide physical rest, and you can study your Bible anytime. However, the spiritual aspect lies in the fact that (1) it is a time God has chosen, a fact significant in itself since one shows respect to God by worshiping when and as He says rather than as one chooses; and that (2) the choice of the seventh day also points back to Creation and consequently, to the Creator.

Fifth Commandment:

Respect for your parents—To honor means to prize and treat as valuable. Think of all that your parents do for you. They provide a home, food, clothing, protection, and guidance. The love we feel for our parents is the first love we know and understand. How can we ever come to show respect and love toward God if we cannot show respect to our parents? You honor your parents when you are kind, and speak respectfully *to* them and *about* them. By respecting and honoring your parents, you learn to respect authority in general, and it is a *necessary* step in learning to respect and love our heavenly Father.

Sixth Commandment:

Respect for another's life—Life is precious to God. The giving of life is God's gift. Man is made in God's image and the act of murder is a dramatic statement for the disregard of God's creation. Any orderly society has certain restrictions on the taking of human life. Absolute prohibition against taking human life does not exist in human society, but the basic principle is at least recognized.

Seventh Commandment:

Respect for the marriage institution—Adultery is probably the most blatant offense against a person's marital partner. Committing adultery is the breaking of the marriage covenant between two people—it shatters the intimacy of mind and body between marriage partners. It can destroy the very foundation of the family unit that is to be built on love, honor, respect, trust, affection, and commitment.

Eighth Commandment:

Respect for the property of others—Love for another requires respect for his empirical self, which includes his family and his physical possessions. While the greatest possession one has is life, and the next greatest is one's marital partner and family, personal property may be an important necessity for continued existence. To take another's property, in a poor

society, may sentence him to malnutrition and a slow death. In a more affluent society, it may produce mental and emotional consequences. Consequently, we must learn to respect the rights and needs of others.

Ninth Commandment:

Respect and honesty in dealing with others—This means to always tell the truth. Lying is deceiving or tricking others into believing an untruth. Gossiping can be lying because you may be saying something about someone that you are not sure is true. When you tell a story, do you exaggerate the details? If so, this is lying. If you begin to allow yourself to lie all the time, you may begin to believe your lies. Lying destroys your integrity. Honesty *is* the best policy.

Tenth Commandment:

The heart of the matter—To covet means you want something that belongs to someone else. In a sense, this last commandment gets to the heart of the four previous commands. One does not kill unless he desires something another person has or can give him (such as property, a better position, an improved reputation, the elimination of a threat or problem, etc.). Even revenge can usually be traced back to envy—a form of covetousness. One does not commit adultery or other sexual sins unless he has first desired what he is not entitled to, what he is not allowed to have. One does not steal or gain through dishonesty without first taking possession of the forbidden object in one’s mind. Have you ever had the feeling that you will only be happy when you get a particular something? If so, this is coveting. Read Hebrews 23:5. Happiness is not the things you desire or get; happiness is being content with what God has provided, and God provides *all* our needs. If a person can control his nature at this point, many of the other temptations shall take care of themselves. Indeed, the Tenth Commandment is spiritual in form and content—it is concerned with the unlawful desire in the mind as well as the specific act. This complies with the teachings of Jesus Christ. As Paul wrote in Philippians 2:3,5: “Let nothing be done through strife or vain glory; but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves...Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus.” The beginning of true love is in the mind.

Teaching Activities

Art and Activities

Activity Pages

Provide a copy of the Activity Page suitable for each of your students. Provide pencils and crayons.

Art Activity

Make a scroll: For the scroll you will need a brown grocery bag, felt marker, sticks or dowels, glue. Cut open the brown bag, and cut the paper to the size you desire. With the felt markers write a shortened version of the Ten Commandments. Then crumble the bag into a wad, unfold it, and crumble it again. Do this several times until the paper is soft. Glue the ends of the scroll to the dowel rods.

Make a tablet—you will need typing paper, pencils, scissors, oil, felt markers, or black pens, and chalk. Fold the paper in half (vertically). Using the scissors cut the top of the paper so that it is rounded. With a paper towel coat the paper with oil. It may take two to three days for your paper to dry, so prepare your paper well in advance of class. After the class

has written a shortened version of the Ten Commandments on the paper, put the papers on a rough surface (such as a stucco wall, or cement walk) and color the surface with the side of the chalk. This will make the paper look like stone.

Explore the Subject

Explore the following questions with your students :

1. What did God mean when He said, “I bore you on eagles’ wings”?
2. What would happen to the Israelites if they obeyed God?
3. What happened when God descended upon Mount Sinai?

Respond and Reinforce

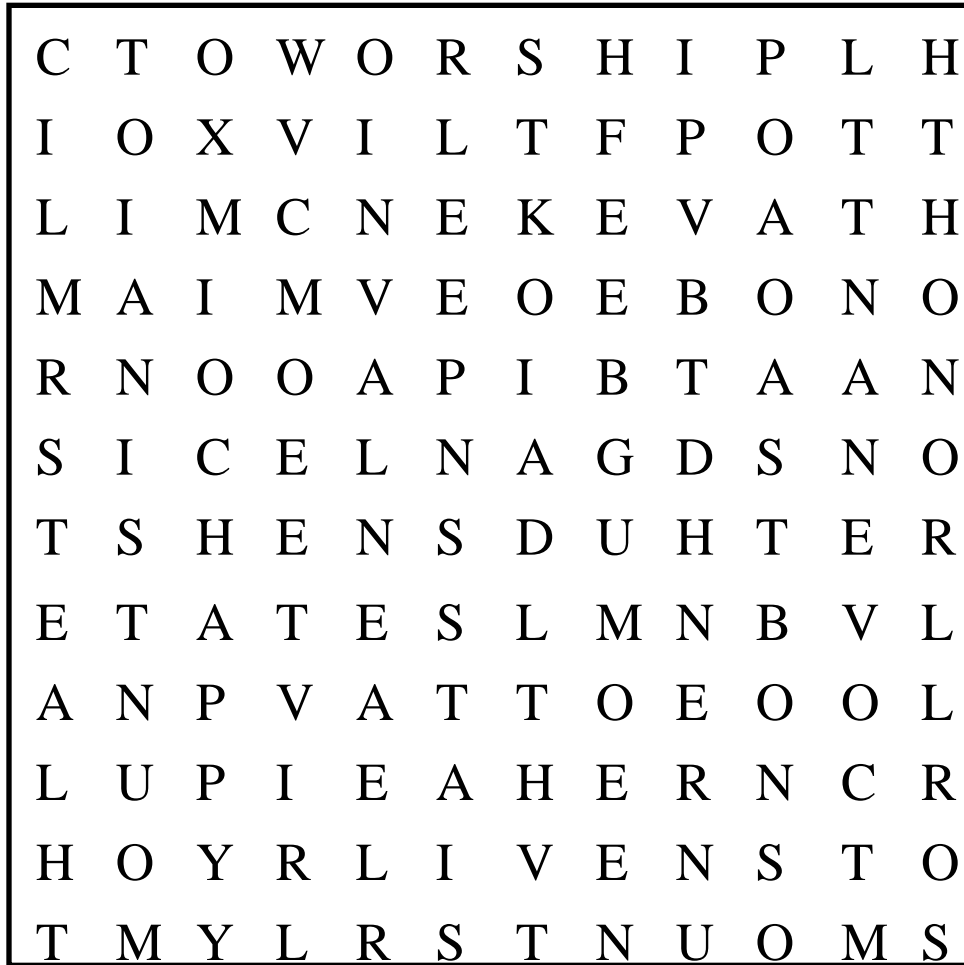
Always close your class with prayer

1. Discuss the memory verse.
2. Discuss the Ten Commandments.

Activity Page

The Ten Commandments Exodus 19:1–24:18

Read the Scripture. Find the words hidden in the word search puzzle below.



MOUNT SINAI
TEN
COMMANDMENTS
LIVE
LOVE

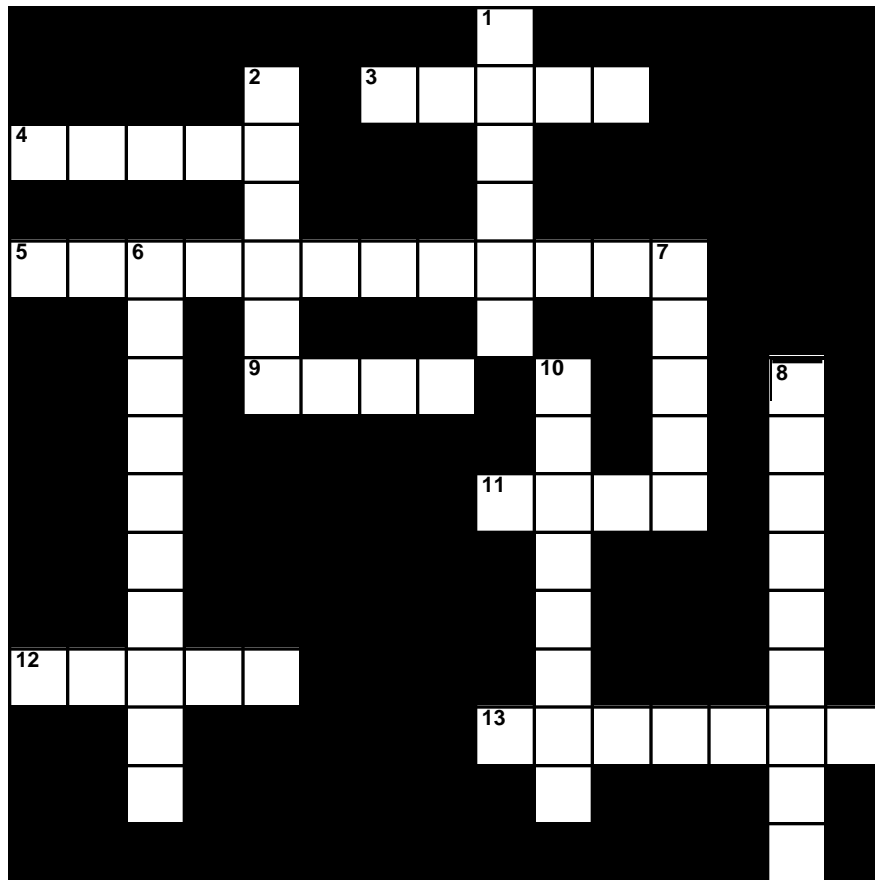
WORSHIP
HONOR
COVET
STEAL
ADULTERY

NEIGHBOR
SABBATH
HAPPY
COVENANT
PEOPLE

Activity Page

The Ten Commandments Exodus 19:1–24:18

Read the Scriptures and complete the crossword puzzle below.



Across

3. Shake with seismic vibrations.
4. The Hebrew prophet who led the Israelites from Egypt.
5. The Ten _____.
9. Deep respect and care for a person or thing.
11. A state of combustion in which fuel or material is ignited with oxygen and gives off heat, light, and flame.
12. Honor and homage toward God.

Down

1. _____ of stone (flat, slablike).
2. The people descended from Abraham. The people of _____.
6. The mountain upon which Moses received the Ten Commandments (two words).
7. The commandments were written upon tables of _____ (II Kings 24:12).
8. The bright flash of electrical discharge seen during a storm.
10. One's fellow human being.

Across: 3. Quake; 4. Moses; 5. Commandments; 9. Love; 11. Fire; 12. Worship; Down: 1. Stone; 2. Israel; 6. Mount Sinai; 7. Tables; 8. Lightning; 10. Neighbor.